

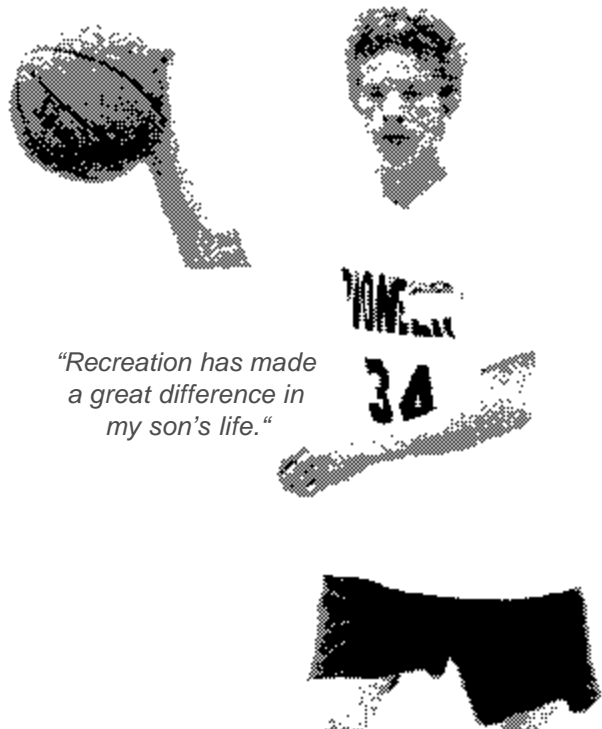
## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Since 1972, the City of San José has provided recreation opportunities that have enriched the lives of individuals with disabilities. These services include aquatics, sports, after school recreation, camps, and community reintegration outings. Accessible transportation has been provided and many programs have been implemented through collaboration with other community agencies. Services and facilities are now used by approximately 3,000-4,000 San Jose residents annually. The need for therapeutic recreation services, however, is much greater.

Currently, the City of San José provides therapeutic recreation programs and services to individuals with various disabilities (see glossary) through four service areas:

- *Adapted Sports and Special Events* provides a continuum of adapted fitness and sports opportunities promoting physical health for people with disabilities. Adaptations to the sport and equipment are made to meet disability specific needs. Special events are provided to foster disability awareness, enhance independence, and promote the accomplishments of persons with disabilities.

- *Social Recreation/Health and Wellness* provides leisure opportunities and facilitates the inclusion of individuals with disabilities into community recreation programs. A therapeutic aquatics program is provided in a leased warm-water pool to develop and maintain health and wellness.
- *Grace Baptist Community Center* provides socialization, recreation, education, and community services to residents of Santa Clara County who have mental illness or developmental disabilities. It is the only program of its kind in the county and serves close to 150 clients daily.



- *Special Olympics of Santa Clara County:* Provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic type sports for children and adults with developmental disabilities. Special Olympics provides participants with continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendships with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.

Providing recreation services for people with disabilities requires a continuum of programs. People with disabilities have different needs, depending on age, type of disability, leisure interest, and skill. To serve this range of needs, therapeutic recreation services must be available in a variety of settings. These include therapeutic activities that are fully integrated with existing neighborhood recreation services, as well as specialized facilities and programs that are specifically designed to serve people with disabilities.

Today, the facilities used by the Office of Therapeutic Services are fully programmed. The number of additional programs and participants is limited by budgetary and facility constraints.

In January 1999, the City of San José Office of Therapeutic Services staff began a strategic planning process to assess community needs for therapeutic recreation and related human services engaging residents and service partners in mapping a plan for the future.

The purpose of the *Strategic Plan, Services for Persons with Disabilities* is to:

- Define both services and recreation facilities needed to meet the needs of individuals with a range of disabilities;
- Define a model for future service delivery;
- Provide a 20-year Strategic Plan to guide the development of therapeutic facilities, programs, and services;



- Identify corresponding funding and staffing requirements for years one through ten; and
- Develop a design concept for a new, state-of-the-art recreation and wellness facility for therapeutic recreation in San Jose.

### ***Developing the Strategic Plan***

Community residents and representatives from partner agencies joined the Office of Therapeutic Services staff in creating a vision for future programs and services, and for a state-of-the-art therapeutic recreation facility.

Program and facility needs were discussed in two focus groups attended by representatives from San Jose area schools and non-profit organizations that serve individuals with disabilities and their families. Participants identified needed programs and discussed facility needs. They also suggested that the Office of Therapeutic Services take a leadership role in promoting the integration of people with disabilities into community programs and services. The groups identified desired outcomes that would result from participation in City of San José programs and services. Partnership opportunities with San Jose agencies and community-based organizations were also identified.

A community workshop provided an opportunity for a broader group of residents and program participants to contribute their ideas to the Strategic Plan. Participants reviewed the preliminary vision and service delivery plan for therapeutic services. They also identified the recreation program needs of individuals with disabilities, and discussed facility needs. This group emphasized the importance of a service delivery system that provides easily accessible services close to home.

Close to 100 community members participated in the development of this Strategic Plan. This process provided the community, partner agencies, and staff with an opportunity to identify comprehensive service needs, priorities, and new partnership opportunities for expanding therapeutic recreation services. The City's Services for Persons with Disabilities Strategic Plan Advisory Board and Steering Committee, and the City's Disability Advisory Commission actively participated throughout the strategic plan development process to ensure that the emerging concepts reflected community needs and values.

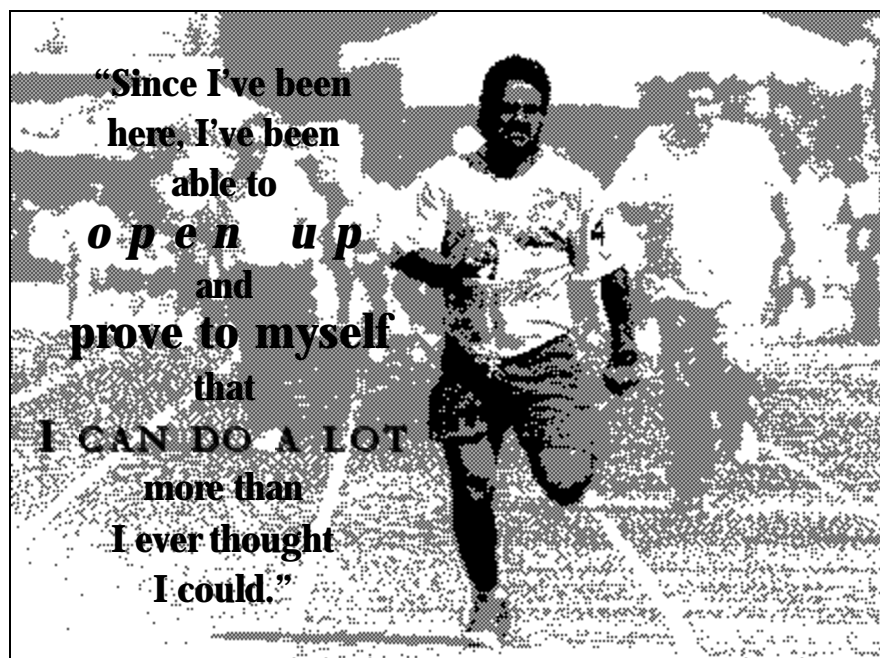
*"Therapeutically, this program has helped me by demonstrating to others the good that can come from trying the impossible."*

### ***Strategic Plan Report***

This report describes the growing need for therapeutic recreation services, and presents a vision, mission and goals to guide the expansion of the City of San José therapeutic services, programs, and facilities to better meet these community needs.

A new service delivery model for serving people with disabilities is presented. This model expands current services to address the full range of individuals with disabilities and therapeutic recreation needs. The model also recognizes the need to provide facilities and services in a variety of locations for the convenience and benefit of San Jose residents.

A key component of the Strategic Plan is a new Recreation and Wellness Center for therapeutic recreation. This state-of-the-art facility will provide a therapeutic aquatic center, an accessible gymnasium and other sports facilities designed specifically for people with disabilities as well as community meeting and activity rooms. This report provides an overview of the Recreation and Wellness Center concept, and presents costs, funding mechanisms and an annual operations and maintenance plan for the facility. A staffing plan for the new Recreation and Wellness Center and for expansion of services throughout the community is included.



To implement the new service delivery model, the Strategic Plan identifies strategies for reaching eight goals for therapeutic services. Action items for completing each strategy are identified in the plan.

Finally, Investing in Results performance measures will help the City of San José assess progress toward goals and the impact on its residents. As these measures are implemented, the Office of Therapeutic Services will build a database of information to guide future planning and provide feedback on the success of each strategy.